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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MARYLAND INSURANCE COMMISSIONER DENIES CAREFIRST CONVERSION AND SALE

ANNAPOLIS, MD (March 5, 2003) -- Maryland Insurance Commissioner Steven B. Larsen today announced he has denied the CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield application to convert to a for-profit company and be acquired by WellPoint Health Networks, Inc.

In his order and accompanying 250 page report, Commissioner Larsen explained his rationale for the decision. That rationale is contained in the attached Summary.

The decision concludes a 14-month process undertaken by the Maryland Insurance Administration. That process, outlined in the Maryland State Government statute, Title 6.5-101, included 15 days of hearings, eight Opportunities for Public Comment held across Maryland, seven expert reports, and more than 87,000 pages of documents reviewed. Commissioner Larsen heard from more than 250 people during the Public Comment sessions and received more than 300 written comments via email and letters from citizens.

According to Maryland law, the Commissioner's decision is held for 90 days during which time the Maryland General Assembly can review the decision and decide whether to take any further action. CareFirst has the right to appeal the Commissioner's decision within 30 days.